



News Release

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While Beating the Heat on California Waterways, Take Precautions to Avoid Drowning

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California State Parks reminds boaters and swimmers that most drowning fatalities are preventable with the proper use of life jackets, knowing the water and your limits, and proper parental supervision. The scorching summer heat drives many Californians to the state's popular beaches, remote rocky coves, lazy rivers and reservoirs for heat relief. Sadly, reports of drowning on state waterways are increasing.

"A day outdoors by the water can turn tragic within seconds," says California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) Acting Deputy Director Christopher C. Conlin. "Keep yourself, your family and friends safe. They are simple actions that you can do, like using a life jacket that can make a difference between a life and death situation."

Below are some life-saving tips:

Life Jackets

- Wearing a modern, comfortable life jacket is smart whenever you are recreating in any body of water—no matter if water levels are low.
- Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard-approved.
- Double check that your jacket is appropriate for your favorite water activities.
- Life jackets meant for adults do not work for children. Jackets that are too big will cause the flotation device to push up around your face, which could be dangerous. Jackets that are too small will not be able to keep your body afloat. [Video](#)
- DBW has partnered with public and private entities to make life jackets available to the public on a loan basis. Visit www.WearItCalifornia.com to find out how you can borrow a life jacket and to view California's life jacket requirement laws.



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Know the Water and Your Limits

- Swimming in open water is more difficult than in a swimming pool - people tire more quickly and can get into trouble.
- Beach users should stay in designated swim areas and be alert for rip currents and sneaker waves. Never underestimate the ocean.
- Avoid competing with others by trying to swim across a river. Currents can sometimes be very strong and easily pull you away. When faced with swift water, even the strongest swimmers may be easily overwhelmed.
- Lower lakes and rivers can expose hazards like rocks and trees, or make them closer to the surface which can cause injuries when diving or jumping.
- Recreating in canals and flumes is strictly prohibited. Stay out of canals and flumes, which are very dangerous due to slippery sides and fast moving water.

Parental supervision

- Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water, giving them your undivided attention.
- Appoint a designated "Water Watcher," taking turns with other adults. Inform children on who is supervising them.
- Do not assume that an adult is supervising your children.
- Avoid being on electronic devices so that you can properly respond to an emergency.
- Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool: they need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather.

Lastly, outdoor enthusiasts are reminded that alcohol is banned in public areas of some parks. So please check local rules. If you do drink alcohol, please remember that there are many dangers associated with the consumption of this beverage. The side effects of alcohol – impaired judgment, reduced balanced, poor coordination, etc. – can be magnified by the outdoor environment. Therefore, your ability to operate recreational vehicles and/or vessels, or the ability to rescue yourself or others in the water can be hindered.

Connect with California State Park's through its [website](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) to view more information on how to keep your family and friends safe when recreating outdoors. You can also visit the department's website to book a camping reservation. It is not too late to make reservations for camping to celebrate Labor Day. For more details or to view available parks, [click here](#).

About California's Drought

California has been dealing with the effects of drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](#).

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water at home, at work and even when recreating outdoors. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#)



California State Parks Mission

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.

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